THE DIVINE LIFE

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Sivaratri Message

Realize the Cosmic Siva

Sri Swami Sivananda

Symbol has been the sole guide of the inadequate human faculty of knowledge to comprehend superhuman states of existence, to grasp transemperical truths. W - ever be the genius of the mind, it cannot think of anything except by relating it to the hypothetical conceptions of space, time and form, whether limited or extended. Religious observances are meant to be such manipulations of this space-time-form thinking with the object of comprehending the supramundane. Sivaratri is such an observance.

Tradition holds that Sivaratri symbolizes the occasion of the "marriage" of Siva and Parvati. Siva is the symbol of Absolute Truth, or Supreme Consciousness. Parvati, or Sakti, is the symbol of the creative or the diversifying Power which projects this material world. The "marriage" of these two symbolizes the unbreakable bond of the Divine with the apparent existence, the pervading of the spiritual force beneath the currents of the earthly life, the merging of the separative, individual consciousness in the Absolute Oneness.

This is the goal of life. Realization of this ideal is the inspiring call of Sivaratri, which is an occasion of the play of subtle divine forces on the receptive mind of the spiritual aspirant. To make best use of these unapparent psychical forces is the sacred duty of every seeker of Truth. How to tap them ? Through prayerful self-dedication to the ideal of the realization of the Cosmic Siva, continuous repetition of the Panchakshara Mantra (Om Namah Sivaya), fasting, and night long vigil on this occasion.

Lord Siva embodies in Himself the ideals of renunciation, asceticism, destruction of untruth and all that is negative. He is an inspiring example of Yoga Siddhi. To realize Him is to practise self-restraint, detachment, self-denial, annihilation of all that is undesirable, and cultivation of all the positive traits that help to attain perfection in Yoga.

What are the positive traits ? I have given them in my *Song of Eighteen, Ities.* They have also been extolled in the Gita. They are :

Serenity, regularity, absence of vanity,
Sincerity, simplicity, veracity,
Equanimity, fixity, non-irritability,
Adaptability, humility, tenacity,
Integrity, nobility, magnanimity,
Charity, generosity, purity.

If you practise them whole-heartedly even for a short time, you will find a remarkable change in you. You will be filled with peace and poise and inner happiness. On the occasion of Sivaratri, resolve to practise these virtues, and plod on towards the goal of the realization of the Cosmic Siva.

As the devotee prays to the Lord while doing Abhisheka, pray you all to Him : "O Lord, as I bathe Thee with water, milk and other ingredients, so, too, do Thou bathe me with the milk of divine wisdom, do Thou wash me of my sins, so that the fire of Samsara, from which I suffer, may be extinguished once for all, so that I may be one with Thee."

May Lord Siva bless you all.*

The Philosophy of Confucius and Taoism

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The subject we are to discuss is : The Philosophy of Confucius and Taoism. Mark the word 'philosophy' as distinct from religion. The teachings of Confucius and his disciples are called Confucianism. Though at certain times it was turned into a State Religion, Confucianism is essentially a moral code, a philosophy of life in the world. Taoism, however, is different. Though started as a philosophy, it was later developed in two entirely different ways as :

(a) The pure philosophy of Laotze and Chuangtze, and (b) the Tao Religion of Chang Tien-Sze (Chang Tao-Lin of the Han Dynasty) which began to flourish about the time Buddhism came to China and it has persisted to this day.

Dr. Hu Shih suggests to call the philosophy of Laotze by the name of "Laoism," so as to distinguish it from Taoism, the religion.

In Chinese, the distinction between the two is clear. The philosophy of Tao is known as Tao Hsueh and the religion as Tao Chiao. Hsueh means to learn or study ; Chiao means to teach. So when you learn about Tao, it is the philosophy. But when you start to teach or to preach, it becomes religion.

Chinese Civilization

The history of Chinese thought may be conveniently divided into three main periods :

(1) the Sinitic Age, when the native religions and philosophies of China held sway. These are called Siniticism.

* The annual Vrata of Sivaratri is being observed on the 10th of this month.

(2) The Buddhist Age from A.D.300 to 1100—a period of 800 years.

(3) The Age of the Chinese Renaissance, which began with the rise of secular Neo-Confucian thought in the 11th century (Sung) and lasted till the 17th century (end of Ming).

The civilization of ancient China was a combination of the Eastern culture of the Shang Dynasty (1766-1122 B.C.) and the Western culture of the Chou Dynasty (1122-258 B.C.). Ancient Chinese beliefs were a product of this combination. They contained the following elements :—

(1) The worship of the ancestors;

(2) The worship of the forces of nature, from which is probably developed the worship of Tien or Heaven, as the Supreme God;

(3) A belief in the idea of retribution of good and evil; and

(4) A general belief in the efficacy of divination in various forms.

Harassed by the barbarian tribes from the North-West, the Chou capital was removed in 771 B.C. from Si-an eastward to Loyang in Honan. The imperial power was on the decline. So the feudal states assumed more and more independence, and contended with each other for political ascendancy, territorial expansion and economic prosperity. A succession of wars with the resultant sufferings set people thinking. They recorded their feelings in the following poems:—

(1) "Let it be!
God hath done it.
Wherefore should I complain ?"

(2) "The people are now in peril.
They look to Heaven, and all is dark and dumb.
It is determined,
And there is none whom it conquers not.
O Great God!
Whom do you hate?"

(3) "The great God is inconstant in His kindness,
And He has spread famine and destroyed the nations.
The great God is wrathful: He thinks not, nor plans.
Let alone the guilty ones who are destroyed. How about the innocent ones who perish with them?"

This Age of the Poets was followed by the Age of the Philosophers. Of the latter, there arose within 100 years, between 570 and 490 B.C. the three great leaders, Laotze, Confucius and Motze. These three laid the foundations for all Chinese philosophies which by the 3rd century B.C. had fairly matured.

Laotze was a rebel in religion and a revolutionary in philosophy; Confucius was a humanist and agnostic ; while Motze tried to purify the old Sinitic religion and give it a new significance. Here we are concerned with the philosophies of Laotze and Canfucius and will deal with them briefly in turn.

I will take Laotze first, partly because he came on the scene first.

Taoism

The Taoists claimed as their founders Laotze and Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor who had reigned 2,000 years before Laotze. This seems rather far-fetched. Nevertheless, it is true that Laotze was not the first teacher of Tao, but he is supposed to have left us the earliest record of such teachings in the Book of Tao, *Tao Teh King* (or *Ching*). He was a contemporary of Confucius, though older by 20 years or more. Next came Chuangtze and Liehtze more than 200 years later who brilliantly expounded and developed the old Master's theories.

The short poems I quoted just now gave some indication as to the sceptical and rebellious tendencies of the age, and

Laotze was a good representative. "Heaven and Earth are unkind," he declared, "they treat all creatures like grass and dogs. Sages are unkind; they treat all men like grass and dogs." In this connection it should be borne in mind that the earliest Chinese sages were all rulers—the wise kings and ministers of the past, whom Confucianists held up as paragons or models of perfection.

Laotze protested against what he considered as the evils of his time—the multiplication of law and regulations, the growth of luxury, the love of name and power, and other evils following rapid material progress.

He advocated "Tao" which literally means The Way. The *Tao Teh King* opened with this description of his Tao :

"The Tao that can be told of
Is not the absolute Tao;
The names that can be given
Are not absolute names.
The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;
The named is the Mother of All Things."

"Tao is all-pervading,
And Its use is inexhaustible !"

Then: "Exhalt not the wise.
So that the people shall not scheme and contend;
Prize not rare objects,
So that the people shall not steal;
Shut out from sight the things of desire,
So that the people's hearts shall not be disturbed."

From the above quotations it will be seen that Tao represents the first cause, the Unconditioned or the Absolute. Laotze advocated a return to the simple and natural life. The best government, in his opinion, would be the least govering and the best society would come nearest to unadorned simplicity and native innocence.

Naturalistic Philosophy

This naturalistic philosophy of Laotze was further developed by his followers. The conception of nature, unfolding itself without plan and without fail, led to speculations on problems of progress and natural evolution; and the exaltation of nature and the natural gave rise to the school of individualism, which placed the freedom of the individual above everything else. In politics, this line of naturalistic thinking furnished the basis of a political philosophy of non-inteference and "non-action." This did not mean doing nothing, but only suppression of personal caprice in favour of natural order and objective necessity.

Such doctrines, especially when applied to politics, sounded very strange to many people then, though they would have been applauded by the modern advocates of the *laissez-faire*. Believe it or not, hi policy was actually put to the test and proved a great success. It was adopted by General Ts'ao Ts'an, who became Prime Minister of the newly-founded Han Dynasty in 193 B.C. It proved so successful that it was continued by his successors. Seventy years of such rule gave the war-ravaged country the much needed rest, and resulted in great prosperity and wealth for both the people and the Government.

The same political philosophy was the foundation of the theories of Law in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C.

Chuangtze

Chuangtze was to Laotze what Mencius (a contemporary of his) was to Confucius, and St. Paul to Jesus Christ. He believed in an immortal Soul, as distinct from the mind which dies with the body. It emanates from the great Impersonal Soul of the Universe, with which it finally reunites, after passing through a series of different

states in conditioned being. To attain this goal of supreme bliss, he suggests abstract contemplation of Tao. But, unlike the Buddhist, he does not believe in mortification of animal instincts or the life of a hermit as the highest form of virtue. For "the perfect man can transcend the limits of the human and yet not withdraw from the world," so claims Chuangtze.

There is so much similarity between Taoism and Vedantic thought that scholars speculate upon the possibility of Chuangtze having been influenced by Buddhistic ideas, which might have infiltrated into China before official recognition of Buddhism.

The philosophy of Tao indirectly created one of the three largest religions of China, whose doctrines and practices, however, would have made Laotze and Chuangtze turn in their graves.

The direct effects of the philosophy upon the peoples are, in the opinion of Dr. Hu Shih, twofold:

It has led to laziness and unprogressiveness as represented by Chinese Epicurians; and on the other hand, it has produced a general attitude of indifference towards vicissitudes of life, thus enabling the people to endure the hardships from recurring famines and floods and continuous misrule.

So much for Taoism or Laoism. Let us turn our attention now to Confucianism.

Confucianism

The teachings of the early Confucian school are recorded in the famous four books, namely:—

(1) Lun Yu or the Analects of Confucius;

(2) Dah Hsueh or the Great Learning, propounded by his disciple, Tsengtze;

(3) Chung Yung or Doctrine of the Mean, by his grandson, Tze Hse, a disciple of Tsengtze; and

(4) Book of Mencius, a disciple of Tze Hse.

As the four books, especially the first, are widely read, I will only touch a few points therein:

(1) Confucious, as pointed out earlier, was a humanist and agnostic. He did not like to talk of strange things, force, revolt, or spirits. His attitude towards spirits and ghosts was to respect them but to keep them at a distance.

(2) He believed in fate.

Recounting different stages in his life from the age of fifteen upwards, he remarked that at 50 he knew the Decree of Heaven. Once when besieged and threatened by the tribesmen of Kang, he remained calm and unruffled. However, his resignation to fate did not amount to the pessimistic fatalism of Chuangtze, against which all human effort seemed helpless. Upon this phase of Taoism, the following cirticism was made by Hsuntze, a leading Confucianist of the 3rd Century B.C. :—

> "You glorify Nature and meditate on her :
> Why not domesticate and regulate her ?
> You follow nature and sing her praise;
> Why not control her course and use it ?
> Therefore I say: To neglect man's effort and speculate about nature,
> Is to misunderstand the facts of the Universe."

(3) Original Goodness of Man's Nature.

While Hsuntze and his followers (like the Christians) believed in the original Badness of Man's Nature, the Confucianists generally believed in its goodness, and referred to the infant as a model of innocence and purity. However, some dissentients like Kaotze argued with Mencius that man by nature was neither good nor bad. It was like water, that

would flow to the East or to the West as it was directed in its course.

(4) Name.

Unlike Laotze, Confucius was very particular about name. "The gentleman hates to die without making a name." "Before doing anything, the name must be properly fixed. When the name is not proper, what you say about the project is not smooth, and then it cannot be carried out successfully."

(5) Moral Regeneration and Rearmament.

The time of Confucius was marked by political and moral lassitude—so much so, that regicide or patricide was not uncommon occurrence. Confucius therefore preached moral regeneration and rearmament. He clearly defined the five human relationships such as between sovereign and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger brothers, and between friends. He laid special emphasis upon filial piety and loyalty of the subject. This doctrine was carried to the extent that when the father ordered the son to die, he must die or be guilty of filial impiety, and that when the sovereign ordered the subject to die, he must die also or be guilty of disloyalty. In course of time this led to acts of excessive tyranny. It was to counteract such evil effects that Mencius, a disciple of Confucius' grandson, uttered these startling words about 2,200 years ago:—

"First in importance are the people, next comes the state; and the sovereign is insignificant."

"If the sovereign treats his subjects like his limbs, they will treat him like their vital organs. If the sovereign treats his subjects like the weeds of the field, they will treat him like bandits and the enemy."

(6) Popularizing Knowledge

Before closing, let me refer to one more achievement of Confucius which has had far-reaching effects. In ancient China, as in other countries, higher learning and official posts were confined to privileged families only. This rule was first broken by Confucius. He had 72 disciples and 3,000 students, whom he sent out all over the states to become officials, to trade or teach others. This example was followed by other teachers, with the result that education and knowledge became more widespread, and official positions open to people, high and low.

Bibliography

For books on Taoism and Confucianism, the "Wisdom of the East" Series is a good starter.

For further reading:—

Analects of Confucius, by Arthur Waley.

All the Four Books with original text and translation, by James Legge.

The Way and Its Power, by Arthur Waley.

Complete works of Chuangtze, by Prof. H.A. Giles.

Book of Tao, with translation by Lin Yutang.

The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy by Prof. Fung Yu-Lan.

History of Chinese Philosophy—I, by Dr. Hu Shih.

(The last one was printed in Chinese 30 years ago. It must have been translated since.)*

A house may be burned by smouldering fire, when a fierce flame would have shown itself and have been easily extinguished.

—Chinese Proverb.

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*A Paper read at the Conspectus of Religions and Philosophies held under the auspices of the Pure Life Society, Malaya.

"Dualism" in the Teaching of Zarathushtra

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Zarathushtra was one of the earliest prophets who emphatically stressed the worship of the One Supreme Being, and yet it is strange that almost all Western scholars have called his teaching a kind of "dualism." In fact, when I was a student at college, I had read in one of our text-books that Zoroastrianism spoke of two equal powers, God and Devil, and so it was a sort of "devil worship !"

The *Gathas* of Zarathushtra do speak of two primeval "creations" of the Creator. The word used in the original teaching is *mainyu*, and this word has been rendered into English by all scholars (including my-self) by the word "Spirit." Translators into other European languages also use the corresponding terms. In English the word "Spirit" has a special connotation owing to the threefold Biblical division of a human being into Body, Soul and Spirit. In Pahlavi the original Avesta word has been merely transcribed as *mainok*, and thence it has passed into our modern Parsi-Gujarati as *mino*, where it implies "belonging to the other world" as distinguished from the corporal.

In all Gujarati translations of the *Gathas* the word *mino* has been invariably used for translating the word *mainyu* from the Avesta, and I would now propose that while translating into English also, the original Avesta word *mainyu* might be retained but an explanation of the word should be given.

Some months ago an esteemed friend drew my attention to my translation of the Avesta *mainyu* by the English word "Spirit." He suggested that the English word was liable to be misunderstood. Thinking over this carefully, I came to the conclusion later on, that my friend was justified in his criticism. So I have come to the decision that it is best to retain the original word *mainyu* in our translations.

Significance of "Mainyu"

In the *Gathas* the teaching of the *mainyu* (dual) is found in *Yasna 30*. In the first verse the Prophet declares that he will now explain about the two *mainyu* created by Mazda, and in verse 3 he says: "Now in the beginning these were two *mainyu* who had revealed themselves as twins, well-working in their thoughts, in their words and in their deeds ; these two show themselves as Good and Evil ; and of these two the wise do rightly choose, but not so the unwise."

The word *mainyu* can be derived from *man*, to think. Thus the original connotation of the word is "the state of the mind" in a human being. We all know that human beings are the crowning creation of God and as such they have been endowed with the priceless gift of "mind," which no creature of the lower kingdoms possesses. In the *Gathas* the cognate word *manah* (*mano*)—the same as in Sanskirt *manas*—means "mind," and as a matter of fact the two words *mainyu* and *manah* have beeo often used interchangeably. These twn words occur in the *Gathas* well over two hundred times, and it is not necessary to discuss all these passages here. Still we may discuss the fundamental verses in which these words, especially the word *mainyu*, are found.

In the very beginning of the teaching we are told (*Yas*.30.3) that the two reveal themselves as the good (literally, "the better") and the bad. If the word *mainyu* (dual) were translated in this passage as

"two Spirits" the implication would be that they are something above and beyond the human being. This would make the human being a sort of plaything of the two God-created "Spirits" outside Himself. Whereas if we take the word *mainyu* in its original (root) sense of "state of mind" the whole teaching is made quite clear. Mind is the crowning gift of God to the human being and the human being is the last creation of God as mentioned both in the Bible and in the Pahlavi Book of Creation (*Bundahishn*. i,28).

The Two Paths

The mind alone leads a human being to happiness or to pain. and it is the mind alone that can make a heaven or a hell for man. It has been well remarked in Sanskrit, *mana eva manushyanam kaaranam bandha mokshayoh*. This lies at the very basis of Zarathushtra's teaching of the two *mainyu*. After asserting that the Creator, Mazda, created the two *mainyu*, the Prophet goes on to say:

"Listen with your ears to the highest Truths,
Consider them with your mind illumined
Before deciding between the two Paths,
Man by man, each for his own self."

There are the two *mainyu*, and man has got *complete freedom* to choose his path in life. He is free to establish either of the two *mainyu* within his being. He is free to choose worldly pursuits, which at best may bring him fleeting happiness, or he may choose the spiritual life, which would bring him happiness for all time and just because, man has full freedom to choose, he is also wholly and completely responsible for all the consequences that flow from his choice. These would be pain or bliss, what we ordinarily term "hell" or "heaven."

The average person in the world prefers the state of mind which pursues the joys of our earth. This is the *aka mainyu*, the evil or the worldly state of mind. As a consequence, though he may obtain success for a time, still in the long run there is pain and frustration for him. After these painful experiences he slowly begins to realize that worldly pursuits do not give him true happiness. So his mind now turns towards God, and he tries to understand and to acquire the *spenta mainyu*, the holy (spiritual) state of mind.

The "evil" is called *aka mainyu* in the *Gathas* and in the Later Avesta Texts, *angra mainyu*. This latter form becomes later *ahriman*, which is more familiar to students. The *aka* (worldly) state of mind is just "evil"—there are no degrees described in the *Gathas*. The chooser of *aka mainyu* chooses the *preyas*, and is sharply distinguished from him who chooses the *sreyas*. On the spiritual path, however, degrees of growth are indicated. Thus in *Yas. 45.2* the "holier" (*spanyah*) *mainyu* addresses the *angra* thus: "Between us neither thoughts nor teachings, nor wills nor yet beliefs, nor words nor yet deeds, neither Inner Selves nor our Souls conform." These differences, so strongly contrasted, can be best understood if explained with reference to the human being and his mental state.

Reality Behind Duality

At the very beginning of the teaching we are told that both the *mainyu* have been "created by Mazda" (Mazdatha). [*Yas.30.1*]

"And when together did these Mainyu Twain
Foregather at Creation's early dawn,
Life did One make, the Other made *Not-Life*.
And thus Creation's purpose is achieved:

Dark is the mind of those that cling to False,
But brightly shines the mind that holds to Truth." (*Yas. 30, 4*)

This verse in clear words gives us the real sense of *mainyu*—the state of mind, which leads man to choose either the False or the True and thus makes the *Life* or *Not-Life*.

It has been pointed out by Bartholomae that in the very name of the Supreme Being of the *Gathas* (*Ahura Mazda*) dualism is inherent. The name itself is double; *Ahura* (Skt. *asura*) signifies the Lord of Life, and *Maz-da* means the Creator of the Material Universe (Skt. *mahat-dha*). Thus the One Supreme Being is the Lord both of Life and of Matter. Thus the essential and fundamental dualism in the Universe is embodied in the very name of the One Supreme, and the two *mainyu* were created by Mazda when He made the Form-side and crowned His Creation with Man endowed with Mind.

When the human being turns towards his Creator, he is associated with *spenta mainyu*, and when he progresses upwards and realizes the Supreme he achieves *spenishta mainyu* (the superlative degree). In that state of mind the human being becomes at-one with his God and is in tune with the Infinite. In the Later Avesta Texts Ahura-Mazda Himself has been addressed as *spenishta mainyu*, which has led to considerable confusion in Later Avesta theology. Still one can see the reason why the Supreme was called by this name. In the highest mental state the human being realizes the *spenishta mainyu* (or his God) within himself.

Mind is the source of all human pain and bliss. In the teaching of the *Gathas* we are told of the *amesha spenta*, the "Holy Immortals," six in number, who are six aspects of the Supreme. Together with the Supreme Ahura Mazda, these six constitute the Holy-Immortal *Heptad*, the seven rays of the Eternal White Radiance of Divinity. Among these *amesha spenta* the place given to *vohu mano* is perhaps the most prominent. In this name also the element *mano* is to be noted. The usual rendering of this name is "Good Mind" or "Good Thought." But I would translate the name as 'Loving Mind." *Vohu Mano* is the "Love aspect" of God, and the Path of *Vohu Mano* is the Path of Love and Devotion, the *Bhakti Marga*. It is the Path of the Mystic, who seeks God through Love. In *Vohu Mano*, as described in the *Gathas* we find the germ of the idea which gave the great poetry of the Sufis several hundred years after the Prophet Zarathushtra. For *Vohu Mano* is the *ishq* of the Sufi.

Ishqa—Love (for God)—Worship of God —Devotion to God.

Ashaka—Lover (of God)—Worshipper—Devotion of God.

THE TWO PRINCIPLES

These two Primordial Principles in One,
Of Light and Darkness, Good and Ill, that seem
Apart from one another, yet are bound
Inseparably together, each to each—
In Thought, in Word, in Action, everywhere
Are they in operation; and the wise
Walk on the side of Light, while the unwise
Follow the other until they grow wise.
These ancient Two, in mutual wrestle-play
Give birth to Twin-Desires, high and low,
That shape as Hate-Mentality in some,
In others as the Better Mind of Love.
O Mighty Lord of Wisdom, Mazada!
Supreme, Infinite, Universal Mind!
Ahura, Thou that givest Life to all!
Grant me the power to control this mind,
This lower mind of mine, this egoism,
And put an end to all Duality,
And gain the reign of One, as is desired
Unconsciously, by e'en the graceless ones,
The evil sinners, in their heart of hearts.

(From the *Gathas*, by Dr. Bhagawan Das)

The Hebrew Concept of "Torah"

Sri Raphael Lowe
[London]

Torah in the wide sense is knowledge and guidance for action as revealed by God; and it can also mean application on the part of man to the study of that revelation. In an apparently narrower sense *Torah* means the Five Books of Moses that contain, either actually or intrinsically, the revelation at Sinai—for Judaism the focal point in human history. But this is not really a narrower sense, because for Jews these five books—called the written *Torah*—are a sort of shorthand precis of the revelation at Sinai. There is, besides this written *Torah*, also an oral *Torah*—itself largely written down now—which is dynamic and covers the whole of Jewish life and outlook. It has developed continuously as Jews have faced the world and ever-widening experience. Because that development is a natural and organic growth the oral *Torah* and the written *Torah* can be regarded as a unity. This holds good whether Moses actually wrote the Five Books as we have them now or whether, as many scholars believe, they are the work of a number of authors from different centuries. The roots of both this written *Torah* and of the oral *Torah*, which contains institutions clearly of a later origin, are intertwined on Mount Sinai.

Expansion of "Torah"

We may visualize the continual expansion of *Torah* as a piece of embroidery that is being perpetually worked on a cavas stretching into infinity. The twin tablets with the Ten Commandments are at the centre, surrounded by a narrow band consisting of the written *Torah*. As Jewish experience broadens and deepens, stitches are added, to the layman's eye perhaps haphazardly, but a subtle design, intelligible to the expert, gives a pattern to the whole. The entire fabric is relevant to contemporary Jewish life and thought, in which a historical consciousness is an indispensable part.

True, there are features in it neither practised nor practicable—such as the sacrificial system based on the Temple—and some that are frankly obsolete, like the injunction not to suffer a witch to live. Though such things may sometimes be allowed to fade, nothing whatever may be cut out, or the fabric will soon disintegrate. Judaism will never consign anything once adopted into its *Torah* to the lumber-room or the rubbish-heap. *Torah* is a scheme into which all ethical endeavour, scientific investigation, and philosophical speculation can and must be integrated; and the individual and corporate striving of the people of Israel so as to integrate it in every generation constitutes its testimony to the truth that life is to be ordered in accordance with God's revealed Will.

It is only in virtue of its striving towards communion with God through *Torah* that Israel wishes to regard itself as a chosen people, and feels justified in maintaining some reserve with regard to its surroundings.

"Olam"

The other word I want to explain is important to us because of what it does not mean. That word is *Olam*, which originally meant the remote past or future but which in post-biblical Hebrew came to mean the World. Now, in English we have several adjectives—secular, mundane, and worldly that imply that the World with

a capital 'W' is a place hostile to spiritual values, and a person who concerns himself with spiritual values is 'unworldly' or 'other-worldly.' These words have this meaning because of the attitude to life of many members of the early Church, who used the Latin words from which they are derived in this derogatory sense and applied them when translating the Bible as renderings of the Hebrew *Olam*.

But what I want to make quite clear is that *Olam* in Hebrew never carried the anti-spiritual suggestion that is implied in Latin and English by mundane, secular, worldly, or the world with a capital 'W.' On the contrary, the division between sacred and secular is one that Judaism can scarcely understand and certainly will not recognize. Certain things in life are, of course, free for common use and other things are recognized as 'holy'—though the Hebrew word for holy really means 'reserved to God.'

Now holiness is felt to be pervasive, or even contagious; anything that is free for common use can, in certain circumstances, be made holy. *Torah* can show man how to spiritualize his use of material resources into a way of life more worthy of Him who provides them and who is pleased to reveal something of Himself and his will through *Torah*.

Does Judaism offer an escape from life, or encourage its exploitation and redemption? Escapism is a way of circumventing the limitations and frustrations of life by concentrating on something sufficiently absorbing to enable one to ignore them. But the object of *Torah* is to infuse all aspects of life with a consciousness of God's presence and will.

Future of Judaism

Picture to yourselves once again the imaginary piece of embroidery. At any time the amount of tapestry completed must correspond to the full sum of human experience; if it does not, and Judaism has nothing but a negative attitude to the moral, political, and metaphysical problems of the day, it is failing in its duty. Judaism today must face up to such problems as atomic warfare, *apartheid* and the knowledge gained by modern exploration of the universe. The answer to all such problems must be worked into the tapestry, and the pattern—as so far completed—will suggest the lines on which their solution is to be sought.

But although the underlying principle of *Torah* excludes escapism, if we think for a moment of the history of the Jewish people, we can see how easily devotion to *Torah* can become a form of escapism, and even more easily be mistaken for one by an outside observer. In the modern world we are so used to a cast-iron division between sacred and secular that Judaism, with its refusal to tolerate such a distinction and its deep awareness of spiritual values, may easily be thought of as 'other-worldly,' and dismissed, quite wrongly, as uninterested in the things of this world.

Such a mistake is all the more likely because Jews have so often in the course of their history been excluded by a hostile environment from full-scale participation in the life of their country. Thus persecution and frustration have often forced Jewry in upon itself, and since it is the cardinal duty of every Jew to meditate day and night on *Torah* as a means of God's revealing Himself to man it is not difficult to see how often, surrounded by suspicion or actual persecution, he might be tempted to regard the whole thing as a means of revelation as an end in itself. The Synagogue and house of study have indeed, proved a haven of refuge to the Jew throughout his tragedy-ridden history. But so long as the sanction behind *Torah*,

namely, God's will to reveal Himself to man, is borne in mind, Judaism is safe from escapism; once it is forgotten and devotion to *Torah* has become an anodyne or intellectual pastime, Judaism is not really authentic.

Practical Religion

Because Jadaism eschews escapism it has frowned on asceticism and has kept a careful watch on mysticism. No faith is complete without a mystical element and indeed the whole idea of *Torah* is a mystery; but mysticism, if cultivated, can so easily dissipate itself into escapism. All Jewish mysticism presupposes as its basis an intellectual appreciation of *Torah* and its institutions.

But although intellectualism is the life-blood of a healthy Judaism it would be a mistake to think of it as a religion meant solely for the highbrow. The first demand of *Torah*, from highbrow and lowbrow alike, is to live an ethical life. Raba, who lived in the fourth century of this era, made this clear in figurative language. At the last judgment, he said, the first question a man will be asked is: 'Were you honest in business?' Only afterwards is he asked: 'Did you regularly devote time to *Torah*?' A further item in the questionnaire is: 'Did you look forward to the salvation?' But Raba concluded, the fear of the Lord is the main thing.

By living a full life the Jew has the opportunity and the privilege of emphasizing through *Torah* consciousness of God's presence in the daily round—private, domestic and public—and in connection with exceptional events whether predictable or unforeseen, joyful or sad. The idea is expressed, in motto-like form, in the divine command addressed to Abraham, which we ought to translate thus: 'I am the Almighty God: Walk thou before me, so shalt thou be whole.'

Means for Perfection

If Judaism demands that one makes the best of life's opportunities, its very insistence that only if life is lived in the consciousness of the presence of God can it be complete, constitutes the challenge to redeem it by making it meaningful. But we must be careful with this word redemption, as it may carry certain implications that are not applicable in Judaism, which knows no doctrine of original sin. Man, although very far from perfect, has in *Torah* the means of making himself perfect. God's grace consists in His having freely revealed to all mankind the opportunity, seized by Israel, of learning to know Him and His ways through *Torah*, a mystical pattern of thought, belief, and action that is eternal, infinite, and so fundamental to life that God himself is pictured as having looked up *Torah* in order to plan the order of the creation.

Torah can thus show man how to redeem life by making it harmonized with the pattern that underlies the cosmos. In every generation it must be Israel's purpose constantly to extend the confines that bound its way of life until, as its sublimest prophet has put it, the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*

There is one that keepeth silence, and is found wise: and another by much babbling becometh hateful. Some man holdeth his tongue, because he hath not to answer: and some keepeth silence, knowing his time. —*Apocrypha Ecclesiastes 20, 5-6.*

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* Broadcast by B.B.C.

Israel Baal Schem Tov

—THE HASIDIC MESSAGE FOR OUR TIMES—

Dr. A. Simon
[Johannesburg]

It gives me great pleasure and joy to have this opportunity of writing about Israel Baal Schem Tov. Ever since I was a student and came into personal contact with Jews from Eastern Europe, my heart was filled with admiration and love for this wonderful man and for his magnificent example and message, which is as valid and as needed in our times as it was in his. Just ponder this profound saying of his: "When we weld our spirit to God, we can let our mouth say what it will; for then all our words and actions are bound to their root in Heaven." And hear this: "When someone makes a mistake, before you blame him, think first: 'If I had done this, what excuse would I find for myself, to justify myself?' Then give the other person the benefit of your excuse. Only thus are we to understand the Divine command: 'Love thy neighbour as thyself?' This, my friends, is the ultimate in love."

A Mystic Religious Movement

Hasidism is a mystic, religious movement which originated in Poland towards the end of the 18th century. It developed very rapidly against a background of stark tragedy, gloom and hopelessness, which had taken hold of the Jewish people. A false messiah, Sabbatai Zevi of Smyrna (died 1676), had held the Jews in high hopes that the time of their suffering, the diaspora, their dispersion among all the nations, was about to end. Instead, when his false claim was challenged, in order to save his life, he became a convert to Islam—and thus a source of bitter disappointment and despair to his countless followers. Shortly after that, the Jews fell victims to progroms, Cossack massacres, causing social and economic ruin to Jewish life in Eastern Europe. To add to the misery of these unfortunate people, their own leaders proved ineffective; lacking both understanding and sympathy. The sterile, bookish attitude of the Talmudic scholars did little, if nothing, to improve the lot of the masses. On the contrary, they looked down upon the common people as 'Am-ha-Arez,' as ignoramuses, who could not fulfil the traditional Jewish command of learning *Torah*, of being learned in the study of the Law of God.

Advent of A Redeemer

In those days of darkness and despondency, Israel ben Elizier, later called the Baal Schem Tov, suddenly appeared. He gave the people new hope, new vision, in fact a new lease of life, so much so, that within a century, half of the Jews in Eastern Europe cheerfully followed the Hasidic way of life. Like so many prophets before him, he also came from insignificant surroundings; and he had no authority to support him other than his own existence, his own conviction. Israel, in Hebrew, means 'fighter for God.' And Baal Schem Tov means: the good master of the Name, the sacred Name of the Lord, thus indicating his power to effect miracles. Born in 1699 in Okup, a hamlet near the Polish-Rumanian border, he died in 1759 in Meczbicz, a town in the Ukraine. He was a true Saint and a Mystic.

A Mystic is a person, who has merged himself in the Supreme, in the cosmic universal Reality, whose soul has grasped

the infinite simplicity of Truth. God is the fundamental Truth of the universe. God is the basic Reality of the universe. God is not bound by our human beliefs, opinions, religions or philosophies. To attain that mystic realization, that cosmic awareness, we require a special process: becoming free from personal desire, from ego, from finiteness. Let me try to give an illustration: Take butter. As we all know, butter comes from milk, it is contained in milk. Yet, it requires a special process, churning, to get butter out of milk. And though butter is contained in milk, milk cannot take the place of butter (e.g., on bread or for baking). Likewise, the Infinite is ever contained within (and without) our individuality. But it takes this special process of discrimination and self-denial to extract the Infinite out of our individual, finite existence. The mystic's outlook is somewhat like this: "Lord, You are ever before me. Looking wherever I may, You are there. All things I experience through You. In Thy light, do I see the light !"

Awareness of the Divine

Hasidism contains the mystic, religious teachings of the Baal Schem Tov and of his successors. The word Hasidism is derived from the Hebiew 'Hasidut': allegiance and piety. It signifies the spiritual will to live one's life in the service and contemplation of God. And this devotion is personified in the leader of a Hasidic community, who is called the Tsaddik. This word means 'he who has stood the test, who has proven faithful.' The Tsaddik's great influence and effectiveness spring from the fact that he is a complete person: his heart and mind and soul are oned, are integrated. As Rabbi Abraham Jehoschua of Apta (died 1776) put it: "Love the Lord thy God' and 'Love thy neighbour' are two commandments. In Truth however the Love of God and the Love of men are one and the same thing." And this is the task of the Tsaddikism: To unite the Love of God and the Love of men.

The theological emphasis of the Baal Schem Tov's teachings was not based on rabbinic intellectualism, but on: Shekkinah—the awareness of the Divine Presence and of man's communion with God; on Kavvanah—the intent and power of genuine prayer; on Tschubah—the turning back to God in humility and purity; and on joy. This holy joy was fully expressed at all Hasidic gatherings: through singing, dancing, and in their toast "l'chayim"—to life. Of joy, the Baal Schem Tov said: "It is the purpose of my existence, to live with and for my fellow-beings on the basis of my love for the Eternal; and to show to all that God is served best through joy; and not through rigidity, severeness or sadness." Only a person whose life is filled with joy can truly love. Mong Tzu, a Chinese philosopher of the fourth century B.C, correctly summed up the human situation in one sentence: "The ways of life are two: love and the want of love." Love, and Love alone, is the fulfilment of the Law. All else is words, wonderful words may be, but all the same, only words, a maze of words, a jungle of words—just words, and ever more words. This is so well illustrated by a saying of Rabbi Baruch of Meczbicz (died 1811), the Baal Schem's grandson. Once, a prominent person said to him "Now let us hear the teachings from you, Rabbi. You speak so wonderfully." "Rather than just speak wonderfully," he replied, "I should be stricken dumb."

"Shekkinah"

Now, about the Shekkinah. Just as air surrounds this earth and fills everything in it, even so is God omnipresent, ever-present. Thus the Mystic is continuously

conscious of the Divine Presence. And every aspect of life must reflect this awareness. Religion is the Truth of our integrated existence. The practice of the consciousness of the Presence of God in every aspect of life—is Religion. In fact, only this *is* Religion. Religion is not something that can be dished out, as it were, in weekly or daily measures. Neither is Religion a show-business. It is worse than useless to put on spiritual airs. "I will not be mocked," said the Lord. (O.T.). Every act of ours can and should be rendered sacred, which means full and complete—by the inner consciousness, not by the outer ceremonies, in which we perform it : and this holds good for everything from sleep to activities, from eating to intimacy. Such action is prayer, is uplifting our soul to God, becoming one with God. That is 'Kiddush-ha-Schem'—the sanctification of the Lord's Name.

Concept of Prayer

Now about the Hasidic concept of prayer. Prayer must never be allowed to degenerate into monotonous, parrot-like repetitions. In prayer we aim at the Highest, at the Ultimate. And before beginning to pray, we must take great care to prepare ourselves. In the words of Rabbi Baruch of Meczbicz : 'I must collect myself and make myself a place to be ready and fit for the descending of the Divine Presence.'

But if one prays mechanically and allows other thoughts to come into one's mind whilst praying, one actually does wrong and thus harms one's sincerity. To prepare ourselves for prayer we must first free the pure thoughts, the very words, from our own 'Galuth,' from our own separateness, from our self-interest and self-importance, from the ego. Prayer is a matter of the heart. As it is written in Berachot (17a): "In prayer what matters is that one's heart is directed towards Heaven." That is Kavvanah. (Devotion). Only that is true praying. All else is lip-service, mind-made formalities and error—missing the mark. "Take away from me the noise of your festivals and of your prayers" (O.T., Amos).

These are then the basic theological concepts of Hasidism, and the sweeping success it had was due to the devout faith of Baal. Schem Tov and of his successors. His immediate disciple, Rabbi Dov Baer, the Maggid of Meseritz (died 1772) was a preacher of outstanding teaching talent, who attracted numerous disciples, who in turn quickly spread the message of Hasidism. The most outstanding of the Maggid's disciples was Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the Rav of Ladi (died 1812). He was a profound scholar who formulated the philosophical system called HaBaD, from Hochma-Bina-Das: uniting wisdom, understanding and knowledge.

Opposition to Hasidism

In certain respects Hasidism, though orthodox, differed from traditional formalities and observances; e.g. their stress on faith rather than on traditional study of *Torah*. This was based on: "The just shall live by his faith" (O.T., Habakuk 2 4) and "The ground you stand on is holy ground." (O. T., Exodus 3.5) This insistence on faith and not on intellectual superiority, together with their great cheerfulness, and their adoration of the Tsaddikim as intermediaries between God and men, as the source of both heavenly and earthly good, brought them into violent opposition with orthodox Rabbinism. This culminated in the 'cherem,' their ex-communication by Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon, the Vilner Gaon the famous sage of Wilna (died 1797). He was the foremost Talmud scholar and Kabbalist of his times. He denounced the Hasidim as heretics and caused them to be widely persecuted. In

fact, he made their existence so difficult, that they eventually left the communal 'Bet-ha-Midrash' (prayer-house) and founded their own 'Klaus' (prayer-room). For a time, Hasidism and Mitnaggedin (their opponents) would not intermarry. A little story illustrates the feeling that existed then: Someone asked the Rav, Shneur Zalman: 'Rabbi, will the Messiah be a Hasid or a Mitnaged?' He answered: 'I think a Mitnaged. For if he were a Hasid, the Mitnagedim would not believe in him; but we will believe in him, no matter what he is.'

The Baal Schem Tov left no written books behind. After his death, his disciples collected his numerous stories and these were eventually published. A hundred years after his death, there had been over eighty Tsaddikim who lived the life of great devotion, with many millions of followers. But from the middle of the 19th century, with the rise of the 'Haskalah,' Western emancipation, the movement began to decline. Yet there are Hasidic communities to this day. One of the leading Hasids in our days is Martin Buber, Professor of Philosophy, of Jerusalem, formerly of Frankfurt. He is foremost among those who have collected and published the wondrous tales of the Hasidic Masters. And now I will relate some more of these famous stories.

Hasidic Masters

Efraim, a grandson of the Baal Schem, dedicated himself to study in his youth and became so great a scholar that this made him deviate somewhat from the Hasidic way of life. His grandfather made a point of often going walking with him beyond the town, and Efraim went with him, though with a hint of reluctance, for he begrudged the time he might have spent in studying. Once they met a man from another city. The Baal Schem asked him about one of his fellow-citizens. "He is a great scholar," said the man. "I envy him, his scholarship," said the Baal Schem. "But what am I to do? I have no more time to study because I have to serve my Maker." From this hour on, Efraim returned to the Hasidic way again with all his heart.

The Baal Schem said this to a Tsaddik who used to preach admonishing sermons: "What do you know about admonishing! You yourself have remained unacquainted with sin all the days of your life, and you have had nothing to do with everyday life—how should you know and understand what sinning is!"

The Baal Schem said: "I let sinners come close to me, if they are not proud. I keep the scholars and the sinless away from me if they are proud. For the sinner who knows that he is a sinner, and therefore considers himself base—God is with him, for it is written 'He dwelleth with them in the midst of their uncleanness.' But concerning him who prides himself on the fact that he is unburdend by sin, God says, as we know from the Gemara: 'There is not room enough in the world for myself and him."

Once the Baal Schem stopped outside a House of Prayer and refused to go in. "I cannot go in," he said. "It is crowded with teachings and prayers from wall to wall and from floor to ceiling. How could there be room for me?" And when he saw that those around him were staring at him and did not know what he meant, he added: "The words from the lips of those whose teaching and praying does not come from the hearts lifted to heaven, cannot rise, but fill the house from wall to wall and from floor to ceiling."

Immortal Teachings

Dov Baer, the great Maggid, once said to his disciples: "I shall teach you the best way to say *Torah*. You must cease to

be aware of yourselves. You must be nothing but an ear which hears what the universe of the Word is constantly saying within you. The moment you start hearing what you yourself are saying, you must stop at once."

In the days of Rabbi Pinhas (died 1791), the prayer-book which is based on the Kavvanot (permutation) of letters of the Divine Name, had just been published. His disciples obtained his permission to pray from that Kabbalistic book, but after a time they came to him and complained that they had lost the sense of intensified existence which prayer had always given them. The Tsaddik told them: "You have put all the strength and purposefulness of your thinking into the Kavvanot of the holy names, and the combinations of the letters, and have thus deviated from the essential: to make your hearts whole and dedicate them to God. That is why you have lost the live feeling of holiness."

Rabbi Pinhas said: "Whoever says that the words of the Torah are one thing and the words of the world another, must be regarded as a man who denies God."

Rabbi Shneur Zalman told his Hasidim: "I was walking in the street towards evening and happened to see something improper. I was deeply troubled that I had failed to guard my eyes, placed myself with my face to a wall and cried my heart out. When I turned around I saw that it was dark and the time for the afternoon prayer had passed. Then I took counsel with myself. I extricated myself from time and said the prayer."

Rabbi Shelomo of Karlin (died 1792) said: "If you want to raise a man from mud and filth, do not think it is enough to keep standing on top and reaching down to him a helping hand. You must go all the way yourself, down into mud and filth. Then take hold of him with strong hands and pull him and yourself out into the light."

Rabbi Israel of Koznitz (died 1814) said to God: "Lord of the world, I beg of you to redeem Israel. And if you do not want to do that, then redeem the Goyim (non-Jews)."

Once the Rabbi of Koznitz said: 'Lord, I stand before you like a messenger boy, and wait for you to tell me where to go."

"You can learn something from everything," Abraham Yaakov, the Rabbi of Sadagora (died 1883) once said to his Hasidim. "Everything can teach us something, and not only everything that God has created. What man has made has also something to teach us." "What can we learn from a train?" one Hasid asked dubiously. 'That because of one minute one can miss everything." And from the telegraph? "That every single word is counted and charged." And the telephone? "That what we say here is heard elsewhere!"

Rabbi Yaakov Yitzhak of Pzhysha (died 1814) was crossing a meadow with his disciples. Cattle put out to pasture there were lowing, and where it was watered by a stream a flock of geese rose from the water with a great cackling and beating of wings. "If only one could understand what all of them are saying," exclaimed one of his disciples. "When you get to the point of understanding the very core of what you yourself are saying," said, the Rabbi, "you will understand the language of all creatures."

Rabbi Simha Bunham of Pzhysha (died 1827) once said: "If I were to give learned and subtle interpretations of the Scriptures, I could say a great many things. But a fool says what he knows, while a sage knows what he says."

When Rabbi Bunham lay dying his wife burst into tears. He said: Dear, what are you crying for? My whole life was only that I might learn how to die."

"Where is the dwelling of God?" This was the question with which Mendel, the Rabbi of Kotzk (died 1859) surprised a number of learned men who were visting him. They laughed at him: "What a thing to ask! Is not the whole world full of His glory." Then Rabbi Mendel answered his own question: "God dwells wherever man lets Him in."

The Rabbi of Kotzk once said to his congregation: "What do I ask of you? Only three things: Not to look furtively outside yourselves, not to look furtively into others, and not to have yourselves in mind."

The Rabbi of Kotzk said: "Everything in the world can be imitated except truth. For truth that is imitated is no longer truth."

The Rabbi of Kotzk was told of a miracle-worker who could work wonders. "All that, even if true, is quite unimportant," he said, "But does he know the secret art of making a devotee of God?"

Rabbi Chajim of Sandez (died 1876) fell ill and suffered from a bad cough. He refused to do anything about it. But his condition worsened and the doctors, who were called in by his family, insisted that he should take their prescription. When he still refused, his oldest son tried to persuade him. But the Rabbi declared: "In 'Olam-ha-Aziloth'—the heavenly abode—one does not use medicines!" "Indeed not," replied his son, "but neither does one cough there!" Thereupon the Rabbi said "Right is with you, my son!" and he took the medicine.

Need of Our Times

There are just a few of the many wonderful tales of the Hasidic masters, and they all go to show their aboslute faith, devotion and God-consciousness, and these are precisely the quelities that are most needed in our times. There is tremendous restlessness and dissatisfaction in the world with things as they are. No sooner has man achieved something than he attempts to beat his own record, as it were, or he begins to lose interest in his achievement. There is a perpetual desire and effort towards improvements; actually this worship of efficiency and success is the modern dance around the golden calf; and despite it all, or rather becuse of it, there is mounting insecurity and strain and futile escapism wherever we look; and in looking around, we will see that people are willing to believe in any and everything under the sun. In political parties, in nuclear-bombs, in capitalism, in communism, in the latest medical treatments or in old-fashioned methods and so forth. If you study an advertising campaign, you will realize that people can be made to accept almost anything: from Hitler-propaganda to drinking Coca Cola. In man's credulity there is one exception, and that is the acceptance of the Reality of God's Presence and Power. That conviction is rare in most parts of the world. People prefer to rely on their own wits and achievements.

The man who takes pride in his achievements, in his position, in his learning, in short, in his own importance, can never experience true, lasting satisfaction, happiness and harmony. He can never find You, O Lord: You can be realized only by those who understand that we possess nothing, that we are nothing. Only then can we be full of You, full of health, full of joy, full of peace.

The purpose of human existence is God-realization. God is fulfilment. God is Peace and Harmony. Live you a life of Peace and Harmony. Be a harbinger of Peace and Harmony. Spead Peace and Harmony wherever you are. Peace be with you. Schalom.

A Symposium on Religion

The following are some excerpts from the speeches of the delegates to the twenty-first session of the All-World Religions Federation which was held at Sivananda Nagar on 5th January, 1956, under the presidentship of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj :

INWARD EXPERIENCE ESSENTIAL

By Erich Pierschel, Germany

Several names or expressions of God are only different facets of the Great Absolute. Behind these expressions, we must have an experience of God in reality. We cannot believe in God unless we have experienced God, or felt His Presence, at least to some extent. When anyone says that one believes in any religion or faith, and when one has not experienced God, one cannot say that one is speaking the truth. Therefore we must experience inwardly what God *is*.

BASIS OF UNITY

By Olgerts Kaugerts, Australia

Heterogenity is the very nature of this world. Its constituents are the pairs of the opposites, and the world is perceived only on account of the sense of attraction and repulsion in us. The only entity wherein unity can be experienced is the Absolute or Brahman. Therefore, in order to prove this unity most effectively, we have to try and exert our best to transcend this world of diversity, without being negligent to our respective spheres of dutiful existence, and unite ourselves with our true Being. Thus can we render the most valuable service not only to ourselves, but to the whole world.

ONE GOAL : DIVERSE PATHS

By Vedanand Jha, B.A., Bihar

We generally pray to some Divine Power in our own languages, in our own ways. Our modes of prayer do differ, and so also places of worship, rituals, and so on, since temperaments and cultural backgrounds vary from person to person, place to place. But the one, common goal is God. The spirit of unity sets in when we learn to leave off the worldly mentality and go in for deeper, inner researches. When we start the real practice of Religion, we come nearer the summit of the experience of the Spirit. For that, the mind must be purified and poised and the struggle for attaining the goal has to be continuous until the objective is attained.

UNIVERSALITY IS EVIDENT

By Guy Lafond, Canada

As one does not question the universality of thought and speech, above the manifestations of diverse thought and speech systems, knowing full well that one pertains to the natural function in man, the other to its manifestation in particular circumstances, so also one should not doubt the universal religious character in man, based on an universal natural function, although one experiences the different means

in which this quality is developed in one. Is our life not based, Christians, or Hindus, on one Principle, one supreme Power, that serves as a link between universe and man, all three being, in the ultimate analysis, one and the same ?

CENTRAL IDEAL OF THE ALL-WORLD RELIGIONS FEDERATION

By Swami Chidananda, Sivananda Nagar

What does the All-World Religions Federation seek to do ? It tries to approach man in his innermost essential aspect, it takes into consideration the spiritual nature, of man, and therefore it tries to bring about a universal unification through that part of man's life which has for its sole concern the assertion and the emphasizing of the spiritual nature of man which is common to all beings all over the universe, and it is this part of man's activity that is the religious life of man. The sole task of religion, as also of the All-World Religions Federation, is to call mankind to realize their super-mental, super-material, spiritual nature, and this is the medium of unification through which all defects and limitations in this world can be overcome.

THAT WHICH ONLY COUNTS

By Mrs. Sylvia Hellmann (Sivananda-Radha), Canada

The Federation helps people to realize the unity of existence. All of us pray only to one God, the same Reality, though in various ways, according to nationality, language, culture, individuality, and if each of us has his or her own language, what does it matter ? The closeness we have to God is after all that which *only* counts. Let us find the One we have in common. "Serve, love, give, meditate, realize," teaches my Master, Swami Sivananda, and these are the fundamental tenets in all religions. Let us practise these and realize that we are actually a big family, centered in God. The realization of this oneness will bring peace to all humanity.

By Prof. Shipra Banerji, M.A., D.A.V. College, Dehra Dun

INNER REALIZATION THAT MATTERS

I am born in a traditional Hindu family, but I had my education in a Catholic convent. At an age when the mind is most impressionable, I had a typical Hindu pagan training at home, side by side with Christian ideals that were instilled into me in school. Later, I had the good fortune to come in contact with a very religious Mohammedan, Ustad Allauddin Khan. I went and studied with him, and then I realized what underlying unity there was in all religions. I did not feel the rub of passing from one region into another when I went to a Catholic school, nor did I feel the bump when I got into a Muslim home. This made me feel that it is the inner realization that matters. The outward expressions hardly make any difference at all.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO GOD

By Hans Lajta, Austria

There are different ways to God, and the different religions are the ways. It is totally unimportant whether you call yourself a Hindu, or a Muslim, or a Buddhist. If you follow the path of the true tenets of your religion honestly, you will attain Self-realization, and when you have reached the ultimate goal, all differences will vanish.

Ashram News and Notes

FAREWELLS

On February 24, Srimati Sivananda-Radha (Mrs. Sylvia Hellmann), of Montreal, left for Canada after a sojourn of five months at Sivananda Nagar. A farewell address was presented to her at an impressive function held in her honour on the night of February 21, when she was also awarded the title of *Yogi* by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

Speaking on the occasion, Sri Swamiji expressed his confidence about the success of the dissemination of the knowledge of Yoga in the West, and said: "Let us offer our highest tributes and homage to Sivananda-Radha for her divine virtues and practice of Yoga, and her strong desire to live in the Eternal and to spread the knowledge of Yoga and Vedanta in the West."

Earlier, on January 28, speaking at another farewell function given to Srimati Margot Pfeifer, of Heidelburg, and Sri Hans Lajta, of Vienna, on the eve of their departure home after a stay of about three months at Sivananda Nagar, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj said that the East and the West were spiritually one, and the greater the contact between the spiritual seekers of both the hemispheres, and the greater the propagation of the knowledge of Yoga and Vedanta in Western countries, the wider the scope for universal well-being, peace and prosperity.

Paying his tributes to Mrs. Pfeffer, Sri Swamiji said: "Sivananda-Saraswati-Margot is a Yogini, and we are full of hope that she will do very good work in her own circle in the field of Yoga Prachar." Sri Swamiji also expressed his great appreciation for the nine-year old son of Mrs. Pfeffer, Sri Claus, who accompanied his mother to India and learnt the practice of Asanas during his stay at the Ashram.

Then speaking about Sri Lajta, Sri Swamiji said: "We are thankful to Hans also. Previously he has translated and published many of our articles in German periodicals. He is a silent Yogi. He has got a desire to do some Yoga Prachar in Austria. He is the proper person. We all pray that God will bless these people."

TITLE AWARDS

At the close of the above-mentioned farewell function, Srimati Pfeffer was awarded by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj the title of *Guru Bhakti Ratna*, Sri Hans Lajta the title of *Sahitya Bhushan*, and Sri Claus Pfeffer the title of *Bala Yogi*. Sri Swamiji also awarded the titles mentioned below to the following persons who were present at the function:

Sadhana Ratna—Sri Olgerts Kaugerts, Melbourne, Australia.
Yogiraj —Sri Erich Pierschel, Dortmund, Germany.
Sraddha Ratna—Mrs. Hanna Herrmann, Winterthur, Switzerland.
Bhakti Ratna—Mrs. Ellan K. Cable, Auckland, New Zealand.
Dharmacharya—Rev. A. Thitadhamma, Bangkok, Thailand.
Sraddha Ratna—Sri Eric M. While, London.

CELEBRATIONS AND MUSIC RECITALS

The Jayanti of Saint Thyagaraja was celebrated at the Ashram with due *eclat* on January 31. Devotional songs composed by Saint Thyagaraja were sung by Swami Sadasivananda, Swami Amarananda, Sri Chandrasekhar and a few others, besides other recitals of the Karnatik music. The life story of this great musician-saint of South India, who lived more than a hundred years ago, was read from Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's *Lives of Saints*, and discourses appropriate to the occasion were given.

On February 12, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj attended a function held by the Dakshina Bharat Sangha in memory of Saint Thyagaraja and other saints at Dehra Dun.

Sivananda Music College: The first anniversary of the Sivananda Music College was held at Sivananda Nagar, on January 31, when Swami Chidananda reviewed the role of this institution in the propagation of the art of devotional music, and its

activities during the past year in the form of training a number of students in the various branches of music

From January 28 to February 3, vocal recitals of Bengali and Hindustani music, including devotional songs, were given by Kumari Lila and Ābha Mukherji. They were awarded the titles of *Sangita Jyoti* and *Sangita Ratna*, respectively, by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

ALL-WORLD SADHUS FEDERATION

The sixteenth session of the All-World Sadhus Federation was held at Sivananda Nagar, on February 7, under the presidentship of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj. The meeting stressed the need for effectively consolidating the vast spiritual potentialities which the true renunciates or the Sadhus possessed, and employing them through individual and collective means in the revival and reinculcation of enduring spiritual values in social frame-works, in public service, in commercial spheres, in international relations. Swami Chidananda, who gave a detailed analysis of the role of the Sadhus which they are expected to fulfil according to their ancient heritage as well as the needs of the time, subsequently attended a meeting held in the same connection by the Bharat Sevak Samaj at New Delhi under the chairmanship of Sri Gulzarilal Nanda, Union Minister for Planning and Irrigation and Power.

OBITUARY

While paying his tributes in memory of the late Dr. Hari Prasad Shastri, Founder-President of the Shanti Sadan, London, who recently passed away after two decades of silent dissemination of spiritual knowledge in the United Kingdom Sri Swami Sivnandaji Maharaj, said: "Dr Hari Prasad Shastri was a scholar, saint, sage and Yogi in one. His passing away means a great loss not only for England but to the world at large." Dr. Shastri, who was also known as Acharya Bodharanya, was a lecturer in Indic and Oriental studies at the Universities of Shanghai and Tokyo before he went to London and established the Shanti Sadan. He was an eminent scholar of Sanskrit, Urdu, Persian and English and also knew Japanese. He is the author of a number of books on spiritual topics and translated into English *Panchadasi*, *Valmiki Ramayana* and a few other Sanskrit texts. He was the founder-editor of *Self-Knowledge* (formerly *Shanti Sevak*) and *Brahmachari*.

AYURVEDIC TREATMENT

In addition to the treatment of diseases, which is being effectively carried on by the Sivananda Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Works, Srimati Ram Janaki Devi is at present continuing the treatment work at the Ayurvedic out-patients' department for women and children.

YOGA-VEDANTA FOREST UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP

H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, Chancellor of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, has conferred on the following the Fellowship of the Forest University:

Sri Jean Herbert, Switzerland; Sri Kaizo Matsuda, Japan; Sri Edward Bittencourt, Chile; Sri M.C. Bijawat, Banaras; Dr. M.H. Syed, Ph.D., D.Litt., Allahabad; Dr. R. Nagaraja Sarma, Ph.D., Madras; Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, Madras; Dr Frederich Spiegelberg, Ph.D., San Francisco; Sri Y. Mahalinga Sastri, Dharmapuram; Dr. B.L. Atreya D.Litt., Banaras; Prof. Haridas Chowdhury, Ph.D., San Francisco; Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, LL.D.; Sri S. Satchidananda Pillai, Madras; Sri N.C. Ghosh, Calcutta; Prof. K.R.R. Sastri, Jaipur.

The Fellowship of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University was also conferred on Dr. Hari Prasad Shastri, of London, a few days before he passed away.

VISITING ASPIRANTS

During the month of February, the following were some of the visiting aspirants who stayed at the Ashram for different durations:

Sri Swami Satchidananda, President Divine Life Society, Salem. Sri Swami Satchidananda, Founder-President, Sivananda Tapovanam, Trincomalee, Ceylon; Sri S.V. Dabbs, Mazabuka, Northern Rhodesia; Sri V. Srinivasan, Sri N.T. Pillai,

Sri R.E Naidoo and party from Durban and Tongaat, South Africa ; and Sri Abani Mohan Chakravarty, of Calcutta who was accompanied by some of his relations.

VISITORS

The following were among those who visited the Ashram during the month of February :

The Hon'ble Shivanandan Prasad Mandal, Minister of Law, Government of Bihar ; H E Miguel Serrano, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Chile at New Delhi ; H.E. Javed Bushehri, member of the Iranian Majlis, who was accompanied by Prof. Alam and Mr Mindhat of Tehran, and Sri Kailas Chandra, S D M., Dehra Dun ; Mrs. and Dewan Chaman Lal, M.P., New Delhi ; Sri Indru Advani, an engineer now residing in France ; Sri H A. von Dewitz, Hamburg ; Sri H.W .Bulow, Stuttgart ; Sri Somdatt Nanabhai, Johannesburg ; Sri N P. Pillai, and party, Durban ; and Dr. Srikrishna, F R C.S., civil surgeon, Dehra Dun.

Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj received a group of about hundred visitors from District Thana, Bombay State, led by Sri V.D Adhiya, on February 7 ; a batch of about fifty girl-students of the D.A.V. College, Dehra Dun, led by Sri Shipra Banerji, M.A., Professor of English on February 12 ; a batch of about 35 students of the Southern Forest Rangers College, Coimbatore ; and a batch of about 15 children of the Jaswant K.G School, led by Mrs. Prem Khosla, who staged a few delightful performances of group dances, chorus songs and an one act play. To all these visitors, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj imparted his usual ethical and spiritual instructions by way of discourses, songs and personal instructions.

Reports from Divine Life Society Centres

GUJARAT

Patan (N. Gujarat). From 22nd to 26th January, 1956, Dr. Sivananda-Adhwaryoo, M.B.B.S., D.O., B.M.S., President of the Divine Life Society, Patan, conducted an Eye Relief Camp at Virnagar. Messrs. Virchand Panachand & Bros., were the sponsors of this Camp and they had kindly made available the buildings of the Saurashtra Central Hospital for the purpose.

More than 1500 patients were examined and 288 operations performed.

Special mention is to be made of Dr. H.G. Adhvaryoo, of Bardoli and Dr Mehta, of Patan, who took part in this selfless service. The excellent skill and devoted services of Dr. Sivananda-Adhvaryoo and his associates largely contributed to the heartening success of this Camp.

Swami Bhumananda, Swami Sivananda-Santananda and Swami Satyananda, of the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society, and Swami Narayanananda, of Bandra Sri Manuvariyaji of Ahmedabad, also participated in the Camp and delivered discourses on spiritual topics and conducted Kirtan and Bhajan every night and in the early mornings.

Sri N.K. Patel, Secretary, Divine Life Society, Wankaner Dr. Solanki, President, D.L S. Wankaner, Sri J.I. Joshi, Secretary, D.L S., Dhrangadhra, Sri L.K. Dave, D.L.S., Radhanpur, Sri Swadhiya, D.L S., Rajkot, Swami Narayanananda, D.L.S. Bandra, Sri Manuvariyaji, Ahmedabad, enthusiastically took active part in the Camp and in the daily Satsanga. A central committee comprising of the above members was formed to propagate Sri Swami Sivanandaji's message in the Gujarati speaking areas.

Yogasana Training at Patan

Sri Swami Bhumananda, who was deputed by the Headquarters, gave training to 600 school students of M.N. High School, B.D. High School and New High School of Patan, in Yoga Asanas and Surya Namaskaras, for a period of five months, while the Govt. Girls' High School students were given similar training by Swami Sivananda-Santananda.

Certificates of Merit were awarded to those trainees by H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and were given away by Swami Satyananda who was deputed for the occasion. The function was presided over by Sri Manekji, District Judge of Mehsana.

Gujarat Tour

From 3rd February to 17th Fedruary, Swami Bhumananda, Swami Sivananda-Santananda and Swami Satyananda visited the following branches of the Divine Life Society in Gujarat and Saurashtra : Rajkot, Bandra, Wankaner, Dhrangadhra, Ahmedabad, Surat, Bardoli and Mehsana, and conducted Satsanga, Bhajan and Sankirtan and demonstrated Yagasanas in different schools and colleges in these places.

CALCUTTA

Demonstrations of Yoga exercises were given by Swami Vishnudevananda, Professor of Hatha Yoga at the Yaga-Vedanta Forest University, during his visit to the city at the following places : Ashutosh Hall, Calcutta University, on February 9; All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, on Feb. 9; the National High School, Lansdowne Road, on Feb. 11; and the South India Club, Lansdowne Road, on Feb. 12. Demonstrations of Yoga exercises were also given by Sri Sivananda-Sushila (Miss Sylvia Heck, of Montreal) at some of these places.

MALAYA

Sri Swami Sadananda, Professor of Raja Yoga at the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, who is now on tour in Malaya, is giving a series of discourses at various places such as Penang, Alor Star, Bukit Mertajam, Taiping, Sungei Siput, Teluk Anson, Batu Gujah, and Ipoh. He was given a grand public reception at Kuala Lumpur, and his speeches were recorded and broadcast by the Radio Malaya.

INDONESIA

Sri Kwee Liong Tian is actively engaged in disseminating the teachings of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj through the columns of *Penjedar*, an Indonesian periodical run by Sri Kwee Boen Hian (Tejelaket 29, Malang, Java). Sri Kwee Liong Tian is now translating Sri Swamiji's *Yoga Asanas,* which he hopes to serialize through *Penjedar*.

In addition to Sri Tijat Ing (vide : the previous issue of *The Divine Life*), Sri Moeslim Dalidd, of Malang, has been publishing leaflets and booklets containing the teachings of Sri Swamiji with the object of augmenting the dissemination of spiritual knowledge in Indonesia.

DENMARK

The following are the representatives of the Danish centres of the Divine Life Society who are engaged in the propagation of the knowledge of Yoga by way of distributing books on the subject, training students in Hatha Yoga, and other means :

Kobenhavn : Fru Dagny Erhard, Ingolfs Alle 15, Tlf. AMager 9470; Fru Henny Busch, Tulipanvej 28/1, Tlf. DAmso 1298; Fru Alice Jorgensen, Sallingvej 29. Tlf. FAsan 735; Fru Anne Villa, Fiolstraede 23, Tlf. PAlae 7442; Fru Edith Enna, Solvgade 103/4, Tlf. 2560; *Aarhus*: Frk. Esther Mikkelsen, Jordbrovej 11/2, Aarhus, Tlf. 12632.

The pioneer of the Hatha Yoga section of the Divine Life Society, who was its first President, is Sri Louis Brinkfort, Gasvaerksvej, 12/C, Kobenhavn.

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NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

Narada Bhakti Sutras with commentary by Sri Swami Sadananda, which has been published by the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh, has been translated into Telugu by Sri Subbarayadu, President, Divine Life Society, Ellore, South India. The Telugu edition is available from the Sivananda Publication League, P.O. Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh, at Rs. 2.